

Historic American Engineering Record

GA-41

BLACKWELL BRIDGE  
BEAVERDAM CREEK, HEARDMONT VICINITY,  
ELBERT COUNTY  
GEORGIA

HAER,  
GA.  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

BLACKWELL BRIDGE

HAER GA-41

Location: Across Beaverdam Creek, 1.7 miles north of Georgia State Highway 72 on Elbert County Road 244, Heardmont Vicinity, Elbert County, Georgia

UTM: 17.345945.3771530  
Quad: Heardmont

Date of Construction: 1917

Present Owner: Elbert County, Georgia

Present Use: Vehicular bridge

Significance: The Blackwell Bridge, a single-span, pin-connected Pratt through truss, is the largest remaining steel truss bridge in Elbert County. It was fabricated and erected by the Austin Brothers Bridge Company of Atlanta, Georgia. It retains its historic integrity and exhibits important features of the "American System" of pin connections.

Historian: John P. Johnson, September 1980

BLACKWELL BRIDGE

The Blackwell Bridge was erected in 1917 across Beaverdam Creek, southeast of the community of Heardmont in Elbert County, Georgia. The new steel bridge was set over the creek on the unimproved public road leading from Heardmont to the old Blackwell place on the Elberton and Petersburg Road. James McIntoch, County Commissioner of Roads and Revenues, announced for bridge bids on September 14, 1917.<sup>1</sup> The steel was set during the autumn for a total cost of \$2,850 by the Austin Brothers Bridge Company of Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

The bridge is supported on granite abutments capped with concrete. The fact that the stone walling has been extended in this way suggests the possibility of an earlier wooden bridge at this site. The present bridge is a single span pin-connected Pratt through truss, 157'10" long and 18'2" wide. The road deck is 25' above Beaverdam Creek. The wooden road deck, not original, is supported on eight composite riveted steel floor beams. The seven-panel truss construction has laced riveted double-channel vertical compression members and plated riveted double-channel horizontal compression members. The main tension members, both longitudinal and diagonal, are steel eye-bars, pin-jointed in the distinctive manner typical of American lightweight steel construction. The bridge retains its historic integrity.

Today the Blackwell Bridge serves the transportation and commercial needs of local residents. The original black paint has nearly peeled off and the wooden deck is completely rotted away in places. Because of the deck's poor condition, the load limit is rated at two tons.

The bridge was photographed and measured drawings were prepared by the National Architectural and Engineering Record in the Summer of 1980 for the Richard B. Russell Dam and Lake Project of the Savannah District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Its future is uncertain.

<sup>1</sup>Elberton Star, September 18, 1917.

<sup>2</sup>Elbert County Commissioners Minutes, January 1918; See also, Austin Brothers Catalog and Handbook for Buyers, Engineers, Builders. Dallas: Johnston Printing and Advertising Co., 1915.